

FIVE THINGS TO DO NOW TO PREVENT A SURGE OF COVID-19

Primary care practices can take a few important actions now to get safely through the rest of the year or until a vaccine is developed. These actions can keep communities safe, prevent the spread of COVID-19, and save lives.

Five things to do now to prevent a surge of COVID-19

1. **Identify all of your high-risk patients**—use the COVID Vulnerability Index (CVI) in CRISP, your EHR, and your intuition
2. **Provide vulnerable patients with expanded care** through telemedicine and special accommodations if they are in need of face-to-face care
3. **Offer testing** for all patients, every visit
4. **Stay current, stay safe**—stay current by keeping up to date with CDC guidelines and case rates in your area. For up to date information, visit [CDC](#), [MDH](#), and [MDPCP](#) sites. Stay safe by taking all necessary infection control precautions while seeing patients.
5. **Prepare for a vaccine**—address vaccine hesitancy with patients, enroll in ImmuNet and set up reporting now, and work with your patients to get a flu shot

Message to high-risk patients the following:

- **High risk communication:** I want to make sure you understand that you are at a higher risk for a serious illness, hospitalization or even death if you come into contact with the coronavirus because of your underlying medical conditions
- **Understanding the virus:** I want to be able to keep you safe and out of harm's way while the virus is still circulating in our community and until such time that there is an effective vaccine. This is a highly contagious and dangerous virus.
- **Asymptomatic spread:** You need to be aware that even asymptomatic people can carry and spread the virus to you.
- **Stay at home:** You should make every effort to stay safe at home when possible.
- **Social distancing:** When you are out and about you should avoid crowds and large gatherings. Always attempt to keep at least a 6 foot distance away from others.
- **Facial coverings:** You should always wear facial coverings (masks covering mouth and nose) when you are in areas with others.
- **Outdoor interactions:** To the extent possible you should choose outdoor as opposed to indoor activities, dining, etc.
- **Extra precautions:** You should be particularly cautious around people who have been in crowds or have recently traveled out of the state, including relatives, caregivers and children who have been in school or daycare settings.
- **Offer to provide care:** I will make special accommodations for you in our office if you need face-to-face care to assure that you are kept safe. If you are seen in the office we will also offer a COVID-19 test if you wish
- **Offer to provide telemedicine visit:** I will also be able to provide care for you through telemedicine if you choose and when appropriate

For more information, please visit:

The Maryland Primary Care Program homepage at:
<https://health.maryland.gov/mdpcp/Pages/home.aspx>